Pacts on Indo-U.S. Cooperation

518. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India and U.S.A. are going to sign pact on eighteen areas of co-operation;

(b) whether it also includes the pact on transfer of technology on hydrogen fuel;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the other areas of proposed co-operation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) Although India-U.S. cooperation straddles several areas, including health, environment, energy, defence technology, as also knowledge-based areas; such as information technology, life-sciences and nanotechnology, there are no new pacts or agreements ready for signature.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Germany's revised visa regime for IT professionals

519. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Germany has assured the Government of India to liberalise access for Indian IT professionals under a revised visa regime; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) and (b) While there has been no assurance given by Germany on liberalising its visa regime specifically for Indian IT professionals, the German government had introduced a liberalised visa regime in July 2000 under the 'Green Card' Scheme for IT professionals from all countries. Indian IT professionals have made use of this scheme. The German government recently approved the extension of this scheme till December 2004.